

on Nietzsche

God Is Dead – Osho

Why did Friedrich Nietzsche declare that God is dead?

Narayana, he had to declare it, because God was dead. The God that had been worshipped for thousands of years was dead; not the real God, but the God that the human mind had created – the God that was in the temples and the mosques and the churches and the synagogues, the God of the Old Testament, the God of the Vedas. Man has outgrown those concepts.

Nietzsche simply declared a fact. Of course, he was as shocked by it as everybody else was. He himself was not ready to accept it. In fact, for his whole life he struggled to accept it. He tried to convince himself by arguing that God is really dead, but it was difficult for the poor man. It would have been difficult for anybody. And he was a man of steel; he was no ordinary man, he was really a strong man, but still it was too much. He had to suffer tremendously because he was the first to declare it, and to be a pioneer is always dangerous. He went through a nervous breakdown. The last part of his life was a state of madness. He risked much for this declaration.

In his great book, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, this parable appears....

‘God is dead’ is now almost a cliché. But when Nietzsche used that phrase it was like an earthquake, a thunderbolt from the skies – it shattered man’s illusions. But it is only half of his message, remember; the other half has been almost forgotten. He declared ‘God is dead’ because he wanted to declare the coming of a new man. He called that new man ‘overman’ or ‘superman’. He said: If God continues to live the old way, man cannot assert himself in total freedom. Man cannot grow, man cannot mature. He will always remain dependent on the father-figure. God as the great father is dead: this is half of the message.

The other half is: now be on your own, stand on your own. Now become mature. Enough of this dependence! Enough of this stupid praying! Enough of your rituals! Stop these games!

Man has been playing many, many games in the name of God, and priests have been exploiting man in the name of God. Nietzsche put an end to all that; the world has never been the same again.

Although Nietzsche suffered much for his declaration, he has served humanity in a tremendous way: he heralded a new age.

The old God is dead – that is a very basic requirement for the new God to appear, a new vision of God, more in harmony with the modern, contemporary consciousness. The God of the Old Testament was perfectly right for the people who invented it. It was perfectly right for the people Moses was talking to; it was a language that they understood. Now thousands of years have passed; God needs new garments, and you go on and on putting the old, rotten garments on Him.

God is not dead. God cannot be dead! But the old concept is dead.

Zarathustra is entrusted by Nietzsche with the task of conveying the news of God's death to the world.

As he starts on his journey he meets an old hermit, a saint. The saint tells Zarathustra that he himself loves God but not man, because man is too imperfect. Zarathustra replies that he loves man, and then he asks the saint what he is doing in the forest. The saint replies, "I make songs and sing them; and when I make songs I laugh, cry, and hum: thus I praise God."

The two separate, laughing like young boys. But when Zarathustra is alone again he wonders to himself, "Could it be possible? This old saint in the forest has not yet heard anything of this, that God is dead!"

The old saint says he loves God, not man because man is imperfect, and Zarathustra says he loves man, and God is dead....

This is going to be the new religion. It has not yet become a reality, although a hundred years have passed since Nietzsche's declaration, although the declaration has spread all over the world like wildfire. But the destructive part has happened; the creative part has not happened yet: Nietzsche declares the superman.

Man has to be loved, because it is only through the nourishment of love that man can grow. Man has to know that he is alone, and he has to know that he has to depend on his own resources and not on some heavenly father. Once man takes responsibility, total responsibility on his own shoulders, a great revolution is bound to happen, because man has infinite potential to grow. Remaining dependent on some God, he has completely become oblivious to his potential, to his future, to his growth.

It is good that God has been discarded. Now man has to take his life in his own hands. And the beauty is, if you become responsible, responsible for yourself, if you declare your freedom – you have to declare it because God is dead; there is nobody higher than you – if you accept that now you have to seek and search your way, you have to grope for it on your own, life will take a new plunge into the depths of the unknown. Life will become again an adventure. Life will again be an ecstatic discovery of new facts, new truths, of new territories, of new peaks of joy.

And it is only by becoming an adventurer that you will come upon the new face of God – which will be far more true than the old, because it will be far more mature than the old.

Nietzsche remained in difficulty: on the one hand he continued to fight with the old God; on the other hand, in moments when he was not so strong, he became scared too.

Zarathustra says,

Away!

He himself fled

My last, only companion,

My great enemy,

My unknown,

My hangman-god.

No! Do come back

With all thy tortures!

To the last of all that are lonely

Oh, come back!

All my tear-streams run

Their course to thee;

And my heart's final flame –

Flares up for thee!

Oh, come back,

My unknown god! My pain!

My last – happiness!

These words look almost insane: “My unknown god! My pain! My last happiness! Ah, come back!”

Nietzsche remained divided, split, schizophrenic. One part of him was still afraid: “Maybe God IS alive”; maybe he was wrong. Who knows? How could one be certain about such profound matters? And he was the first to say it, so naturally he was scared. He wanted to get rid of the enemy. He called God ‘the enemy’, enemy of man, because God had been like a rock on the chest of man – your so-called God. I am not talking about the God of Buddha and Mahavir and Zarathustra and Jesus and Moses, no. I am talking about the God of the common masses, of the mob. Nietzsche is also talking about the mob.

The God of the crowds is an ugly concept: it shows much about your weaknesses, but shows nothing about the truth of existence. When you pray on your knees you simply show your weakness, not that you know what prayer is. When you go to the temple you go to demand

something, to beg for something. You simply show your beggarliness but nothing about God. Very few people have known the truth of God.

If Nietzsche had met Buddha, Buddha would have perfectly agreed, and yet disagreed. He would have said, "You are right: God is dead, the God of the crowds. But there is another vision, the vision of the enlightened ones. Their God is not a person; their God is life in its essence. And how can life be dead? Trees are still green, birds are still singing, the sun is still there, the night still becomes poetry, love still happens. How can God be dead?"

God as existence can never be dead; God as a concept has to die many times. Each time man grows, the old concept has to be dropped. The old has been dropped.

The problem with the contemporary mind is: the old has been dropped, half the purpose of

Nietzsche's declaration is fulfilled. The other half is missing: man has not yet become rooted in his own being; hence there is great meaninglessness all over the world. Everybody is feeling a kind of dullness, sadness, frustration. Everybody is living nothing but a kind of long, drawn-out misery, anxiety, anguish. Life has become synonymous with a kind of agony. All that you can do is use pain killers, tranquilizers, somehow go on pulling yourself together till death comes and you can rest forever.

Sigmund Freud says that man can never be happy. At the most we can reduce his unhappiness a little bit. At the most we can make him normally unhappy. That is the goal of psychoanalysis: to make people normally unhappy, to help them not to become abnormally unhappy. What kind of goal is this? But this has happened, and Freud was simply stating a fact. Looking at the modern man, looking into the unconscious of the modern man – and he was the one man who had looked deepest into the conscious and the unconscious mind – how could he lie? He had to say the truth.

He came to understand that it is impossible for happiness to happen. How can man ever be happy? – when God is dead, and when man has not searched for another vision, for another goal, for another star so that the journey can start again, the journey of meaning and significance. Without God, man can at the most be normally unhappy.

Freud's conclusion is part of Nietzsche's declaration.

My work here consists in doing the other half; hence I don't talk much about God. Hence even if atheists come and want to become sannyasins, I accept them with an open heart. Even they are a little suspicious of why I am accepting them. They say, "We are atheists. We don't believe in God. Are you still ready to accept us as sannyasins? Can we still meditate?"

And I say to them: you are the persons who can meditate! The person who believes in the old God cannot meditate: he depends too much on God; he is never a grown-up person. Meditation needs a certain growth. You can meditate; God is not needed. God is not a prerequisite for meditation, but when you meditate, slowly, slowly you become aware of God.

God is the ultimate revelation, not the prerequisite. God is not a condition to become a sannyasin; God is the ultimate realization of sannyas.

But then you will not be angry with Nietzsche, remember, because you will know that what he was saying is also true. He was talking about the concept of God.

Moses's concept of God is certainly dead. When Moses died, his concept of God died. In fact, it lived too long; for three thousand years it continued to prevail. That simply shows the stupidity of humanity. Otherwise the moment an enlightened person leaves the world, his concept of God will also disappear. If we have learned anything from the enlightened person, we will go ahead, further ahead. We will stand on the shoulders of the enlightened person and we will be able to look further ahead than him. We will create better visions of God, beautiful visions of God. We will come closer and closer to the truth.

And remember, one can only come closer and closer to the truth. The moment you come absolutely to the truth, you disappear. Then only truth is.

Nietzsche says, "God is dead." I say: I am dead and God is alive, very alive.

That's what happens if you go on meditating: one day suddenly you find you are not, only God is.

-OSHO

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